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07

Annual Report

2008  
International  
Year of  
Languages

# Being Available for Language Development



... Word of the Director

## Laying the foundation



**In 1992 my wife and I visited the Boyo Division for the first time. We researched the effectiveness of the Kom mother tongue education project. I rode around on the motorbike of the literacy coordinator of the language project, and I enjoyed the scenic vistas and the challenge of travelling on mountainous roads, but above all the wonderful hospitality of the people.**

My time there made it very clear to me that for many children mother tongue education is indispensable in order to succeed in life. Many of them could not read after years of schooling in English! I vowed that my own contribution to language development in Cameroon would be to help children learn to read and write in their own language first. I made myself available so that children would learn better English, would be proud of their own culture and would be able to help build a better Cameroon.

Fifteen years later, I am still just as committed to that goal . I am excited to see mother tongue education flourish again in the Kom area. Over the years SIL helped establish the Operational Programme for the Teaching of Languages in Cameroon (PROPELCA) in many languages in Cameroon, hand in hand with organisations like the National Association of Cameroon Language Committees (NACALCO) and the Cameroon Association for Bible Translation and Literacy (CABTAL). It started as an experiment with mother tongue education but has grown beyond that. We are now building on that experience and modernizing it so that it fits with the approach of the Ministry of Education. It is called the ‘Kom Education Pilot Project’ (KEPP). And it works! Children are now learning to read within 6 months of enrolment in school. We were proud to recently show the success of the program to Mrs. Haman Adama, Minister of Basic Education and to a delegation of representatives of different ministries.



This experience shows what can happen when everyone joins hands: volunteer teachers, NGOs, local authorities and government ministries. For 40 years, we have made ourselves available to the language communities of Cameroon and we will continue to do so. I hope that you will also contribute in some way to the welfare of these communities. This Annual Report will show you that it is worth it.

Nelis van den Berg  
*Director SIL Cameroon*

### **Administration in Cameroon in December 2007**

George Shultz,  
*General Director*  
Steve W. Wittig, *Director of  
General Administration*  
Ken Morton, *Director of  
Technical Services*  
Dave Lux,  
*Personnel Director*  
Teresa Heath, *Director  
of Language Programmes*  
Richard Gravina, *Greater  
North Regional Director*  
Ria Hedinger,  
*Bamenda Regional Director*



### **Executive Committee**

Dan Grove,  
*Chairman*  
Greg Beyer  
Nancy Haynes  
Tony Smith  
Mary Beavon



## Introduction

# Language development expertise is available



Since 1969, SIL Cameroon has been helping those who want to develop their mother tongue. This help is made available through linguistic research, the development of alphabet charts and other mother tongue literature and the translation of various materials including Scripture. Nowadays, nationals from more than 150 communities have seen their capacities built for the safeguarding and the revitalisation of their language.



Courses/  
Workshops

Language  
Communities

Represented  
Participants

### 5 in Linguistics

including text transcription, analysis of nouns and noun phrases, and dictionary publication preparation

18

39

### 9 in Literacy

including programme management, practical writing, teacher training and production of: HIV/AIDS brochures, primer, reading & writing books, calendars & agendas

50

103

## ... Training

# A link between my people and the world

**Bébiyéme Nkomo Raymond and Kibassa Otoké are both from the Mbam-Inoubou Division. They are committed to bring development to their respective communities. They have faithfully attended various courses with SIL for some years. Thanks to this training, they have been able to discover the structures of their languages and they have learned the translation principles, which enable them to produce books in the mother tongue.**

According to Raymond, the SIL training which he attended since 1998, has helped him to better understand what the mother tongue means to people. "Beyond the personal fulfilment that comes from the mastering of my language, I feel I am called to serve as a link between my people and the world." Without this, he concludes, "this world will be closed to my people."

A testimony like this, which is one of many, gives great satisfaction to the training department. It shows that it is making progress towards its goal of strengthening the languages of local communities within and outside of Cameroon.



**1 in Adult Training**  
including a workshop based on five principles of adult education

7

12

**15 in Translation**  
including translation principles, various epistles and a seminar for high-level translation consultants

77

204

**5 in Computing**  
basic computing course, paratext and foundations

30

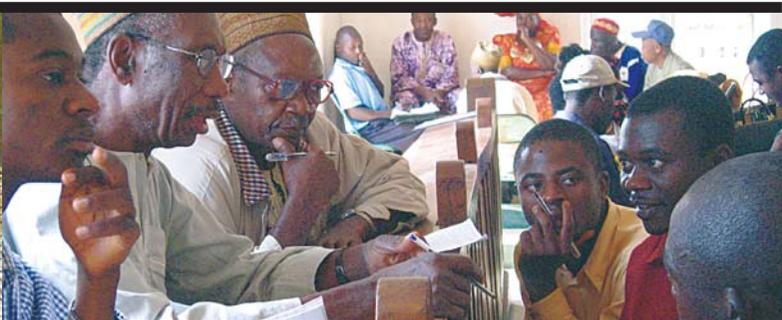
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In the chart on the left, the number of language communities is the actual number of communities represented at a given category of course or workshop. The number of participants, however, includes those who may have taken part in more than one course or workshop.



## ... Linguistics

# The technical before the practical



The General Alphabet of Cameroon Languages is a result of several years of collective efforts made by researchers within the framework of the development of writing systems for African languages in general and for Cameroon languages in particular.

The ten related languages of the Ndop Cluster in the North West Province had finished all their "orthography statements" by the end of 2007. These are linguistic guides, which explain how the sounds of a language work together and how they can be represented on paper. Preparing them involves collecting, recording, checking and analysing many of the language's words. This gives readers and writers a basic alphabet, together with spelling and punctuation rules. Along the way, many important decisions must be made which could mean the project succeeds... or not. For example, too many letters or other symbols may make it difficult for the writer - but too few make it difficult for the reader. There may be more than one acceptable way of doing things: as owners and users of the mother tongue, the language community makes the final decision in such cases. A well-designed orthography, once learned, makes it easier to read and write other languages. SIL follows the nationally agreed standards of the General Alphabet of Cameroon Languages.

All this technical work leads on to the practical work of 'language development'. Without a good linguistic foundation, literacy, mother tongue education and translation is less likely to succeed. **A good foundation ensures a solid building.**

# It makes a difference!

**Reading is a big challenge to the majority of pupils who just left primary school to secondary school. Many don't know the difference between vowels and consonants. They are unable to sound the letters of the alphabet.**

Ferdinand Kfusalu is a form five student in the Government High School Njinikom in the North West province of Cameroon where the Kom language is officially taught. His interest in learning the mother tongue is to help him first of all understand the tradition and the culture of his people. "If I concentrate mostly on English and French, it will affect me negatively as I will not be able to communicate with my Kom people and I will not know what is demonstrated during traditional and cultural events", he said. "Besides, the learning of the mother tongue also enables me to better understand the 9 vowels in the Kom language, the 5 com-

In recognition of the 9th edition of UNESCO International Mother Language Day, February 21st, 2008, SIL Cameroon in collaboration with CABTAL and NACALCO stood in favour that

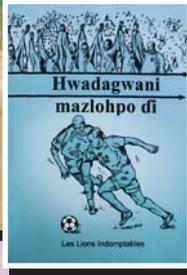
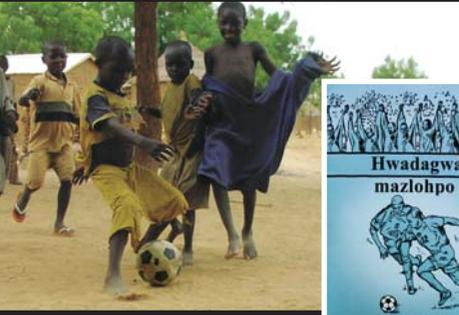
*"Languages are the most powerful instruments of preserving and developing our tangible and intangible heritage. All moves to promote the dissemination of mother tongues will serve not only to encourage linguistic diversity and multilingual education but also to develop fuller awareness of linguistic and cultural traditions throughout the world and to inspire solidarity based on understanding, tolerance and dialogue".*



plex vowels and with this I can easily read the other languages. The teaching of the mother tongue enables us to differentiate between vowels and consonants and even to pronounce the letters well and our school performances are greater".

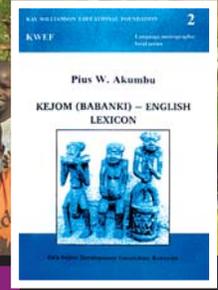
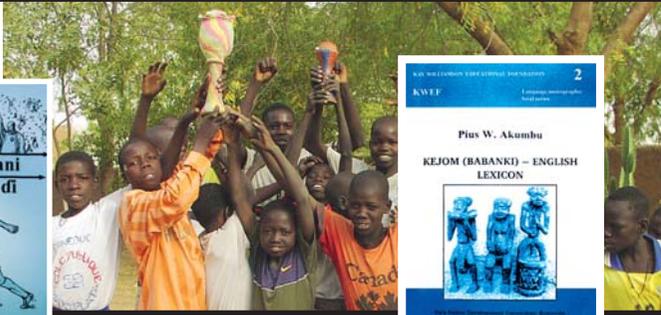


# Football in Vamé and Ouldémé



Playing football is a sport that most Cameroonians enjoy. This has always been the case with the Ouldémé and Vamé people of the Mayo Plata, Far North province. Recently, a book about football was printed in their languages. According to Mendze Pierre, a Vamé man, who bought a copy of this book, "everybody wants the football book. People sit in groups and look at it together." The publishing of this book has helped many in these communities to understand what they are doing and do it better. In fact, some folks borrowed Pierre's book and he hasn't seen it since. Let's hope he will soon get his book back!

# Kejom-English Lexicon



During this reporting period, a 2000-word "Kejom (Babanki)-English Lexicon" with an "English-Kejom Index" was published. It had its beginning when some Kejom speakers attended a "Discover Your Language" course years ago. They collected words with the aim of developing a writing system for the language. Later, SIL short-term linguist Christine DeVisser added more words and did some tone analysis. More recently, Pius Akumbu (who now has a PhD in linguistics from the University of Yaounde 1) took the existing computer database and, with guidance from SIL consultant Dr. Robert Hedinger, checked all the words, added more words, wrote the introduction and finished preparing it for publication. It was printed with a combination of local and external funds.



## ❖ National Language Publications

### National Language Publications

**Awing** - Learn to read and write Awing + Awing English dictionary and English Awing index

**Babanki** - Read and also write the Kejom language

**Bambalang** - The alphabet book for Bambalang + Bambalang alphabet chart

**Daba** - Songs in the Daba language

**Fulfulde** - Ajamiya course, Fulfulde language written with Arabic letters

**Gemzek (Zulgo)** - Let's learn to read in the Guemzek language

**Kako** - Let's learn to read in the Kako language

**Kom** - Guide to the Kom alphabet + Kom Sweet Nectar Book

**Koozime (Badwe'e, Konzime)** - Kande story, learner's book + facilitator's manual + Akpaa story

**Kwanja** - Kande story, learner's book + facilitator's manual

**Lamns'o (Nso')** - Primer 1 Lamns'o' + Riddles

**Limbun** - The Limbun alphabet

**Mambila** - Kande story, learner's book + facilitator's manual

**Melokwo (Moloko)**

La chèvre + Learn to read and write the Moloko language + Tha Lalaway Market

**Mundani** - Primer 1 + Postprimer 1

**Ngomba** - You can learn to read in Ngomba

**Ngyemboon** - Kande story, learner's book + facilitator's manual

**Nomaande** - Let's read and write Nomaande

**Nuasue (Yangben, Mmaala, Elip)** - Nuasue alphabet + Manual for reading and writing + Nuasue alphabet book

**Numaala (Mmaala)** - Alphabet of the Numaala language + Let us learn, read and write Numaala + Numaala alphabet book

**Ouldeme** - ABC in the Ouldeme language + Let's learn to read in the Ouldeme language + Football book

**Pinyin** - Pinyin reading and writing book

**Tunen** - ABC in the Tunen language + Read and write the Tunen language

**Vame** - Football book

**Vute** - Kande story, learner's book + facilitator's manual

**Yemba (Dschang)** - Kande story, learner's book

**Yambasa** - Manual for reading and writing the Nulibi language

### Technical Manuscripts

**Bafanji** - Orthography guide + A phonological sketch of Bafanji (Chufie')

**Bambalang** - Orthography Guide

**Fulfulde** - Verb-subject inversion in Fulfulde of Diamaré

**General** - Twins in Bamunka + Ncane social structures + Preliminary report of some findings on Primary Education in Boyo Division.

**Karang** - Dictionnaire Karang - Français (CD)

**Kom** - Integrated reading teachers' guide for Kom Sweet Nectar Anthology class 1 book 1 + 2

**Merey (Meri)** - The verb phrase in Merey

**Muyang** - Matériel d'introduction pour un dictionnaire Muyang-Français

**Ngiemboon** - Précis d'orthographe pour la langue ngiemboon

### Thesis

#### **Aghem**

THORMOSET, David A. 2007. Phonological Reconstruction and the Aghem Central Vowels. M.A., University of Calgary, Alberta, Canada. 153p.

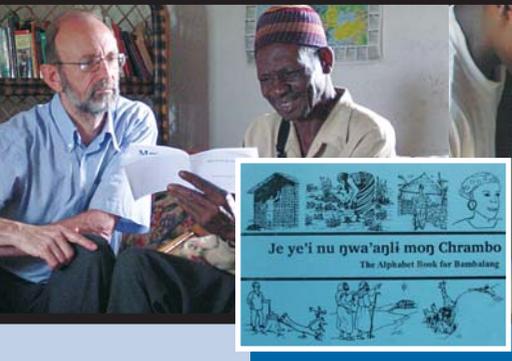
#### **Tunen**

ISAAC, Kendall M. 2007. Participant reference in Tunen narrative discourse. 268pp. Dallas, USA: Graduate Institute of Applied Linguistics.



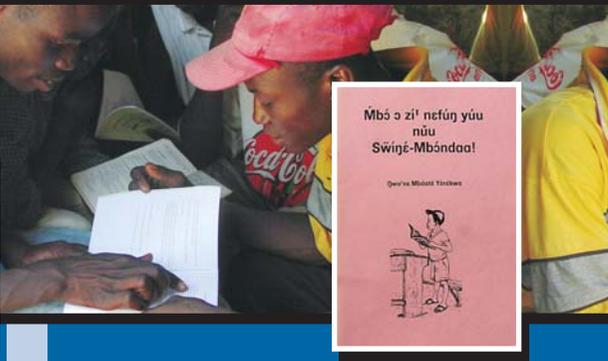
SIL Cameroon publications are primarily written for national language speakers. In 2007, SIL members worked together with nationals to produce publications in the mother tongue covering a wide range of topics including dictionaries, folktales, health booklets, literacy and primers. See the website for more details: [www.sil.org/africa/cameroun/index.html](http://www.sil.org/africa/cameroun/index.html)

# Alphabet Books for Ndop Cluster



Alphabet Books have been published or drafted for eight of the languages of the Ndop Cluster. These useful tools are in some ways the starting point of a literacy programme. They do two things. First, they are a publicity tool which stimulates interest in the language and encourages mother tongue speakers to learn to read and write. Secondly, they provide some initial reading practice, with short sentences illustrating each letter and accompanied by a picture, which provides a strong clue to the content of the text. Mother tongue speakers drawn from the community, whom SIL team members tutored during workshops held for this purpose, wrote the alphabet books for these languages. The books are being enthusiastically received by language communities and are preparing the way for more structured reading and writing books.

# Ngomba Reading & Writing Manual



The Ngomba Reading and Writing manual aimed at teaching Ngomba literacy to Ngomba speakers who are already literate in French. Interest was low because people thought it expensive and complicated. A local pastor suggested turning the one volume into a series of six books with 4 lessons each. That was the idea behind the new "You can learn to read Ngomba!" transition manual series.

The new books are simpler in style with fun exercises, more illustrations and interesting stories by Ngomba authors (one short episode per lesson). Comprehension questions after each episode challenge the learners to write in Ngomba as well as testing their reading. Each volume in the new series is only one-fifth the price of the original single volume, making them more affordable, as well.

Volumes 3 and 4 came out in July 2007. Volumes 5 and 6 are being worked on and should come out by the same month in 2008.



## ... National Language Media Services Building a bridge



### Media Services provided for National language development:

- Consultation
- Field/Studio Recording
- Production
- Mastering
- Duplication

### Materials produced or distributed in 2007:

- Badwe'e
- Yemba
- Yamba
- Ngomba
- Ngiemboon
- Limbum
- Fulfulde
- Pidgin

### Archive contains:

- 522 CD/DVDs
- 60 languages
- Audio Texts
- Singing
- Stories
- Film

**The importance of media in our work doesn't need to be proven itself when we realise we want to reach communities that have strong oral traditions. Most of the information flow between people in those communities is not written but oral. If we want to have an impact on those communities we need to approach them with information in a form which is close to their local reality; using orality.**

Gédéon Noussi, the SIL literacy coordinator for the Far-North, understood this clearly when he attended a showing of the film "Transformations" in a local church in Guduba. His goal was to mobilise the christian community to pray for and support the national language development efforts in that area. "The result was beyond comprehension ! The church was crowded and people were pushing one another at the windows to be able to see a video on a small computer screen. At that moment I asked myself what would happen when the Jesus film will be available in this language!" He exclaimed.

SIL uses audio and audiovisual means to build a bridge, to link the written language with its speakers while they are not yet capable to read.

... SIL International

## Making the services of SIL available

From a small summer linguistics training programme with two students in 1934, SIL has grown to an international linguistic organisation with over 5,000 staff. These personnel come from over 60 countries around the world. Its linguistic investigation exceeds 1,800 languages spoken by over 1.2 billion people in more than 70 countries.

SIL International is a faith-based organization that studies, documents, and assists in developing the world's lesserknown languages. SIL's staff shares a Christian commitment to service, academic excellence, and professional engagement through literacy, linguistics, translation, and other academic disciplines. SIL makes its services available to all without regard to religious belief, political ideology, gender, race, or ethnic background.

### SIL Cameroon Personnel

#### Nationalities:

Australia

Bahamas

Cameroon

Canada

Costa Rica

Finland

Portugal

Sweden

Switzerland

Taiwan

The Netherlands

The Republic of Ireland

The United Kingdom

The United States

of America



SIL has been serving in Cameroon since 1969. During these 39 years, SIL Cameroon has given assistance to over 100 language communities.

### SIL International

Carolyn Miller,

*President*

John Watters,

*Executive Director*

John Hollman,

*Africa Area Director*



Language Development  
In all Provinces  
of Cameroon



**Yaoundé**

Siège et centre de formation de la SIL Cameroun / Administrative office and training centre of SIL Cameroon



**Bamenda**

Bureau régional de Bamenda / Bamenda Regional Office



**Maroua**

Bureau régional du Grand Nord / Greater North Regional Office



**During 2007 SIL gave consulting, training or logistical support to language development in the following languages:**

**Province de l'Extrême-Nord  
Far North Province**

Bana	Mbuko
Buwal	Mbedam
Cuvok	Merey
Fulfulde	Mofu-Gudur
Gemzek	Moloko
Hdi / Hidé	Mpade (Kotoko)
Jimi	Muyang
Lagwan (Kotoko)	Ouldéme
Mandara	Podoko
Matal	Vamé
Mazagway-Hidi	Zulgo

**Province du Centre  
Centre Province**

Bafia	Nulibie
Basaa	Numaala
Lefa	Tuki
Nomaande	Tunen
Nuasue	Vute
Nugunu	Yambetta

**Province du Nord-Ouest  
North West Province**

Aghem	Kom
Awing	Lamnsò'
Baba	Limbum
Babungo (Vengo)	Mbembe
Bafanji	Meta'
Bafut	Mfumte
Bamali	Moghamo
Bambalang	Mungong
Bamukumbit	Nchane
Bamunka	Ngie
Bangolan	Noni
Bum	Nsari
Engwo	Oku
Essimbi	Pinyin
Fulfulde	Wey
Kejum	Wushi
Kemezung	Yamba

**Province du Nord  
North Province**

Daba  
Guidar  
Karang  
Pana

**Province de l'Adamaoua  
Adamawa Province**

Kwanja  
Mambila  
Tikar

**Province du Sud  
South Province**

Bakolo  
Batanga  
Bulu  
Kwasio (Ngumba)

**Province du Sud-Ouest  
South West Province**

Akoose  
Barombi  
Denya  
Ejagham  
Kenyang  
Mundani  
Oroko

**Province du Littoral  
Littoral Province**

Bakoko  
Bamkon (Abo)  
Mkaa

**Province de l'Ouest  
West Province**

Ngjemboon  
Ngomba  
Ngombale  
Yémba

**Province de l'Est  
East Province**

Badwe'e  
Baka  
Bangando  
Bikele  
Kako  
Koonzime  
Makaa  
Mpongmpong  
Njyem



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